

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 EURE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

INRE-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 ACDA-07 SAJ-01 OMB-01 SAM-01

/070 W

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O R 101413Z SEP 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8575

INFO AMEMBASSY BELGRADE

AMEMBASSY BERLIN

USMISSION BERLIN UNN

AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST

AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL MUNICH

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USLO PEKING IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PRAGUE

AMEMBASSY SOFIA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WARSAW

CINCPAC

USIA WASHDC

DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 14309

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CHU, UR

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SUBJECT: SOVIET TREATMENT OF MAO'S DEATH

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED. TASS REPORTED CHINESE PARTY CHAIRMAN MAO TSE-TUNG'S DEATH IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE NEWS WAS MADE PUBLIC ON THE MORNING OF SEPTEMBER 9 (MOSCOW TIME) WITH A BRIEF ITEM CITING NCNA'S ANNOUNCEMENT. MOSCOW RADIO BEGAN CARRYING THE ITEM AS ONE OF THE LAST ITEMS ON ITS REGULAR NEWS BROADCASTS BEGINNING AT 12 NOON. THE EARLY (6 P.M.) TELEVISION NEWS AND THE EVENING NEWS-PAPER IZVESTIYA ALSO CARRIED ON THE SHORT TASS ITEM. THE MAIN EVENING TELEVISION NEWS (9 P.M.) MENTIONED MAO'S DEATH AS THE FIRST FOREIGN NEWS ITEM (AFTER EIGHT DOMESTIC ITEMS) AND READ THE BRIEF CONDOLENCE MESSAGE FROM THE SOVIET CENTRAL COMMITTEE. PRAVDA AND ALL OTHER CENTRAL NEWSPAPERS (SEPTEMBER 10 MORNING) CARRIED THE CONDOLENCE MESSAGE PROMINENTLY (BUT NOT ON THE FRONT PAGE) ACCOMPANIED BY THE BRIEF TASS REPORT. AS FAR AS WE KNOW, THERE WAS NO SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT IN ANY MEDIA AND THERE HAS BEEN NO PUBLIC COMMENTARY THUS FAR.

2. THE CONDOLENCE MESSAGE WAS SENT IN THE NAME OF THE SOVIET CP CENTRAL COMMITTEE AND EXPRESSED "DEEP CONDOLENCES" TO THE CHINESE CP CENTRAL COMMITTEE. IT ALSO EXPRESSED "SYMPATHY" TO MAO'S FAMILY AND RELATIVES. THE MESSAGE, LIKE ALL SINO-SOVIET MESSAGES IN RECENT YEARS, WAS NOT ADDRESSED TO ANY CHINESE BY NAME AND WAS NOT SIGNED BY ANY SOVIET.

3. COMMENT. THE CONDOLENCE MESSAGE IS VIRTUALLY IDENTICAL TO THAT SENT ON CHOU-EN-LAI'S DEATH IN JANUARY 1976 AND ON TUNG PI-WU'S DEATH IN APRIL 1975, BUT IT LACKS THE POSITIVE TONE OF THE MESSAGE SENT ON CHU TE'S DEATH IN JULY OF THIS YEAR. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL. THE SOVIET SINOLOGISTS WE HAVE SOUGHT TO CONTACT ARE ALL "UNAVAILABLE" UNTIL THE BEGINNING OF NEXT WEEK. SOME INDICATION OF SOVIET ATTITUDES, HOWEVER, WAS PROVIDED TWO WEEKS AGO BY SOVIET ORIENTALIST YURIY GANKOVSKIY, WHO TOLD EMBOFF THAT HE WOULD HAVE TO RETURN FROM VACATION IF MAO DIED WITHIN
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THE FOLLOWING MONTH. WHEN EMBOFF ASKED WHETHER THE SOVIETS REALLY EXPECTED MAO'S DEATH TO SET OFF SUCH DRASTIC CHANGES THAT, HE (GANKOVSKIY) COULD NOT BE AWAY FOR A FEW WEEKS, HE SAID THAT THE EVENT WOULD HAVE ENORMOUS SIGNIFICANCE AND THAT THE CONSEQUENCES, EVEN IN THE SHORT TERM, COULD NOT BE PREDICTED. THE SOVIETS WOULD HAVE TO BE PREPARED FOR WHATEVER HAPPENED, HE SAID, ADDING THAT THE DID NOT BELIEVE HUA KUA-FENG HAD THE STATURE TO HOLD THE

LEADERSHIP FACTIONS TOGETHER FOR LONG. IN A CONVERSATION WITH ACTING POL COUNS ON SEPTEMBER 9, VIKTOR KOMPLETKOV, DEPUTY CHIEF OF THE SOVIET MFA'S USA DIVISION, REFERRED TO THE CURRENT VISIT TO CHINA BY FORMER DEFENSE SECRETARY SCHLESINGER, SAYING " I SEE YOU ALREADY HAVE YOUR REPRESENTATIVE IN PEKING FOR THE FUNERAL." END CONFIDENTIAL.

STOESSEL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PRESS COMMENTS, DEATHS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 SEP 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: GolinoFR
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976MOSCOW14309
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760342-0664
From: MOSCOW
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760973/aaaackii.tel
Line Count: 123
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: GolinoFR
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 12 APR 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <12 APR 2004 by CollinP0>; APPROVED <13 APR 2004 by GolinoFR>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SOVIET TREATMENT OF MAO'S DEATH
TAGS: PFOR, CH, UR, (MAO TSE-TUNG)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006